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Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa

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CIDSA UPDATE

Coalition for Illinois' Divestment from South Africa

343 S. Dearborn, Suite 919, Chicago, IL 60604

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Downstate Organizing Conference

By Lucille Teichet

CIDSA's state-wide presence was multiplied and strengthened through a successful Downstate Organizing Conference held on September 21 at the Illinois Disciples Foundation, Champaign. About 75 people came from 10 Illinois cities as well as a few participants from South Bend, Indiana and St. Louis, Missouri to give and receive new insights, information and inspiration for local organizing work on South Africa.

The key note address on the current state of the struggle was given by Elizabeth Schmidt, author of *Decoding Corporate Camouflage and One Step in the Wrong Direction*, a booklet critiquing the Sullivan Principles (which is available through CIDSA for \$1.00). She is currently residing in Zimbabwe. While too in depth to summarize here, a few key comments can be lifted. Quoting Beyers Naude, she said, "The people's resistance—where previously limited to a few major areas—is now in remote towns, villages, in all parts of the country." Not only are there more sabotage attacks by the ANC underground, but today support for the outlawed group is above-ground, out in the open.

Black South Africans continue to call for international economic sanctions but they are not waiting for us, Schmidt commented. They have started imposing their own sanctions in a 70-100% successful consumer boycott of white-owned shops. And the South African economy is in shambles with the rand worth \$.35, down from \$1.35 four years ago;



Downstate divestment organizer Diane Meisenhelter addresses conference participants.

gold at \$318.70 an ounce down from \$800 in 1980; inflation at 20%; and a debt of \$18 billion, \$12 billion of which is due this year. Finally, Schmidt discussed in depth the effects of disinvestment/divestment on South Africa, saying it is anything but symbolic, it is one of South Africa's greatest fears and it is already having devastating effects on the South African economy.

Following Schmidt's talk, two small group discussion sessions focussed on speakers training and issues that arise in networking and coalition building. After a lunch break which included listening to a video tape of Dr. Allan Boesak's address to the Urban League in June, the afternoon was divided into 3 sections. There was discussion on the federal sanctions and their impact on efforts to pass state divestment legislation. Next was a presentation on lobbying and discussion of an organizing strategy to see that Illinois divestment bills HB 317 and HB 330 pass this spring. Finally, a panel

shared learnings from particular actions going on around the state like city ordinances and regulations, direct aid, institutional divestments and product boycotts, and the group discussed ideas for where to go from here and a CIDSA downstate structure.

By far the most significant aspect of the conference was the participants, and the opportunity for them to meet and network. The critical issue now is how to follow up the conference with increased local organizing around the state. CIDSA is prepared to be a resource for this with both resource persons and materials. As this newsletter goes to press we are working on a strategy which will build the strong local presence we need to see the passage of Illinois divestment legislation. If you are interested in being a part of this work or participating in an upstate organizing conference contact the CIDSA office (312) 922-3915, Diane Meisenhelter (217) 394-0300 or Lucille Teichet (312) 285-6059.

Next CIDSA Meetings:

Sunday, November 3 and December 1,
U.E. Hall, 37 S.Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m.

Executive Inaction

By Judy Hatcher

This summer, for the first time, national attention focused on whether or not the United States should take economic action against the apartheid regime in South Africa, and how strong such action should be. Both houses of Congress were flooded with bills, ranging from total divestment to bills including the Soviet Union and Nicaragua as targets. President Reagan, clinging to his non-policy of "constructive engagement," vowed to veto any sanctions bill, but as the summer went on even his supporters on Capitol Hill were convinced that some sort of gesture had to be made.

Just as Congress was set to pass a relatively ineffective bill in September, the President out-flanked his opposition by announcing an executive order which was even weaker than the Congressional measures. The Republican Senate majority seized the chance to stall the legislation's passage on the floor, and the bill lost its momentum, thanks to the Great Communicator.

The executive order, like the Congressional initiative, lends credibility to the Sullivan Principles as a code for business conduct. The order keeps U.S. companies that employ 25 or more people in South Africa from receiving federal export assistance if the companies do not abide by the Sullivan Principles.

Other aspects of the President's sanctions are even more disheartening. The sale of new Krugerrands may

finally be banned in this country—at a time when sales of the gold coins may be at an all-time low. Bank loans to the South African government will be banned, except those that are judged to "benefit" both whites and non-whites, or are deemed to improve the economic, educational or health status of non-whites. The only positive aspect of the executive order is that it bans the sale of computers to South Africa if the technology helps enforce apartheid, and the sale of nuclear goods and technology will be sharply curtailed. Still, every segment of the President's executive order has a loophole big

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Why Divest?

U.S. investments strengthen the apartheid economy, thereby increasing the ability of the white government to preserve its power. The past twenty-five years disprove the claim that investments can be an agent for change because the apartheid government's repressive power has only increased during this time. Yet even if every U.S. firm in South Africa practiced commendable labor policies, apartheid would still not be threatened.

The companies must comply with South African law and coexist with disenfranchisement, population control, and forced removals, as well as detentions and bannings. The black community, from 1959 Nobel Peace Laureate Albert Luthuli to 1984 Nobel Peace Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu, has continually said "we don't want our chains polished, we want them removed." The divestment of publicly controlled Illinois funds from South Africa will be a significant contribution to the world-wide anti-apartheid movement and will help create circumstances for the South African people to forge fundamental change in their country.

Who is CIDSAs?

The Coalition for Illinois' Divestment from South Africa was founded in June 1983 to push for the passage of a divestment bill in the Illinois State Legislature. Over 60 organizations and 250 concerned individuals from across the state now comprise CIDSAs' growing membership.

MEMBERSHIPS

Enclosed:

Organizational Member Donation	\$15
Individual Member Donation	\$10
Amanda Club Donation	\$100
Additional Contribution	

NAME _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____

PHONE (home) _____

Please return to: **CIDSAs**, Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa
Suite 919, 343 S. Dearborn, Chicago, Ill. 60604



The Student Anti-Apartheid Movement—

By Sahotra Sarkar

Over the last six months the student anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. has emerged as one of the most militant voices demanding divestment of institutional funds from banks and corporations that do business in South Africa. The growing campus movement has already seen the highest level of student activism around any issue since Vietnam.

Since April almost 3000 students have been arrested throughout the nation in civil disobedience campaigns directed against university involvement with apartheid. In Cornell University alone, more than 1200 students were arrested last spring. During the past summer activity on campuses declined as students went home for summer. However, this summer also saw intensive planning for fall action by campus activists as students prepared for a National Student Conference on South Africa and Namibia from Nov. 1-3 in New York and a Midwest Conference Against Apartheid and Racism on Nov. 16-17 in Chicago. The fall has already seen a new burst of activity as more than 200 campuses participated in the October 11 protests to commemorate South Africa Political Prisoners' Day.

The emergence of the student movement is, in part, due to the general focus on apartheid augured in by Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign, the launching of the Free South Africa Movement by Randall Robinson and years of work by the American Committee on Africa. However, the real impetus for the growth of the movement came from events in Columbia University in New York.

On March 25th seven students at Columbia including two South Africans, Danisa Baloyi and Jose Desousa, began a hunger strike that lasted two weeks and forced University President Michael Sovern, to meet with them. On April 4th the students also began a blockade of the University's undergraduate administration building which they renamed

Mandela Hall. A court order forced the students to suspend the blockade on April 24th but meanwhile the militancy of these protests had sparked similar demonstrations throughout the U.S.

By the end of April sit-ins and blockades had occurred at Cornell, Harvard, Tufts, Stanford, the University of Iowa, and the University of California at Berkeley, Los Angeles and Santa Cruz. At Oberlin College in Ohio, following a student rally and march on April 24th, the Faculty Senate voted to divest. On October 7th, after a summer study conducted by a specially appointed body, Columbia also decided to divest.

In Illinois, which has an exceptionally poor record for institutional and public fund divestment, campus groups have generally concentrated on that issue. While the movement continues to grow, major protests have already occurred at the Northwestern, University of Illinois at Chicago and Champaign, Roosevelt, Illinois State University, and the University of Chicago campuses. At Northwestern 122 students were arrested during protests last spring. In Chicago there were 16 arrests after a Board of Trustees meeting of the University of Illinois which voted against divestment.

Faced with these growing calls for divestment University administrations have usually responded by invoking the Sullivan Principles and arguing that by investing in companies that abide by these principles they are agents for positive social change in South Africa. Student groups have uniformly rejected the Sullivan Principles for being ineffective and objectionable because they leave the basic structure of apartheid untouched. At the University of Chicago student activists have also discovered that, contrary to the University's stated policy, the University continues to invest both in companies that are not Sullivan Principles signatories and in those that receive unfavorable ratings for their compliance to those principles. This discovery has sparked a new wave of

protests.

Until very recently contact or cooperation between anti-apartheid groups on different campuses had been minimal. Since campus groups tended to concentrate on their respective universities' divestment, such cooperation has often been deemed unnecessary. Strategies for divestment have varied from campus to campus. In particular, strategies have had to be very different for private and state universities since the latter have popularly elected trustees and are consequently far more sensitive to public opinion than the former. However, three factors have emerged which make more cooperation between campuses quite critical. First, for state universities, the same Board of Trustees and investments are the source of dispute in several campuses as in the case of the Chicago and Champaign campuses of the University of Illinois. In such cases groups on different campuses have found it to their advantage to coordinate major actions. In both Champaign and Chicago the major anti-apartheid organizations in the **Divest Now Coalition** and the two campuses generally work together.

Second, campuses are beginning to find it useful to share resources such as information and speakers, thereby making optimal use of them. In the Midwest these efforts are coordinated by the **Southern Africa Network** maintained by the **Third World Political Forum**, a broad coalition of groups and individuals interested in Third World struggles. Third, several student groups have adopted direct aid to the liberation movements in Southern Africa as a strategy to be pursued along with demands for divestment. In order to provide significant aid to the movements students have had to organize direct aid campaigns simultaneously on several campuses. Both the **Third World Political Forum** and the **Anti-Apartheid Student Alliance**, a network of Black students in and around Chicago, are gearing up for a major direct aid campaigns during the

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The Student Anti-Apartheid Movement

Continued from page 3
1985-86 academic year.

Even though the student movement keeps growing, it remains divided in some aspects. On several campuses anti-apartheid groups have been split along racial lines, usually with white students on one side and Black and Third World students on the other. Black and Third World students argue that their needs and agendas are ignored in predominantly white groups. They accuse white students of "racism within the movement" and note that white students often exploit their numerical superiority to their own advantage and are reluctant to address the problem of domestic racism.

They also point out that between 1980 and 1984 the South Africa issue was not fashionable among white radicals. During that period the issue was kept alive by Black and Third World students who, because of their personal experience of racism, had no choice other than to fight apartheid and racism. Now, they feel, their role and efforts are being ignored by the white students. They also emphasize that Black and Third World student leadership is crucial to the anti-apartheid movement because of the "unique perspective" these students bring to any problems connected with racism.

Disputes along these lines have created tensions and sometimes engendered splits in campuses around the country from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island to the University of California at Berkeley. In the Midwest, Black students even organized a boycott of an anti-apartheid rally at the University of Chicago sponsored by a predominantly white group.

Over the summer many of these problems have been resolved, often by the unhappy compromise of forming coalitions of various groups organized along racial lines. Students have begun to learn from experience of an unfortunate, but persistent, element of the American political scene: that it is virtually impossible to form multi-racial mass organizations around any issue. In the plan-

ning of the student conference in the Midwest, however, some unity has been achieved as well-organized Black and Third World students have forced their white counterparts to accept an agenda commensurate with Black and Third World needs.

In spite of these difficulties, the student movement has had considerable successes. Students have been consistent in making the link between apartheid and domestic racism in their struggle. As such, the students' agenda has been somewhat unique among those of other parts of the anti-apartheid movement throughout the country. On many campuses students have raised as an issue the special problems encountered by minority students on campus. As part of their campaign against domes-

tic racism students have demanded that these problems be addressed and that universities become more active in minority faculty and student recruitment.

By pursuing these demands students have taken an important step towards changing the elite power structure of universities in the future. Within the context of the anti-apartheid movement alone, students have already achieved divestment at Oberlin and Columbia during the last few months. Finally, by exploring possibilities of direct aid, students have contributed much towards the development of a post-divestment strategy which, once divestment is achieved, will generally form part of the next phase of the anti-apartheid struggle.

Executive Inaction

Continued from page 2

enough to walk through.

What does all this mean for those of us organizing for divestment on the state and local level?

We must demand that divestment is legislated. Unless the executive is sincere about imposing severe sanctions, he or she, like the President, can retain the controlling hand in divestment. Since an executive order, resolution, proclamation, etc., is not a law, it is difficult for it to be amended, supervised by the public, or carried out. At the same time, it takes our elected representatives off the hook. A bill that is passed through the state house or city council can be strengthened or amended. It carries the weight of a mandate of the people, and voters can see that it is carried out.

We must push for the strongest possible legislation we think we can achieve. Anti-apartheid activists around the country were disgusted by the weak, loophole-ridden compromise bill that nearly passed in Congress. As usual, the mainstream

press characterized the legislation as something to be reckoned with. Yes, it was the first time that Congress has taken much of any stand against South Africa—it's about time. But it's hard to mobilize popular support for a gesture, which is what the watered-down Congressional bill finally was. Many of the disappointing aspects of the executive order are not much different from the House bill.

Reluctant legislators can be convinced to vote for divestment—especially if elections are coming up. Eight of the twelve Republican Senators who were willing to break with the President over the sanctions bill are up for re-election next year. Here in Illinois many state senators and representatives will be engaged in tough fights for their seats in Springfield. And of course the statewide races, from the gubernatorial race on down, should be forums for the divestment issue. If we keep the pressure on at the grassroots level, we can win Illinois divestment from South Africa.

TASK FORCES REPORT

City Task Force Report

Mayor Washington's committee studying divestment has submitted their ordinance to Ald. Danny Davis for introduction into the city council. Their ordinance cannot be submitted to the Finance Committee until the first divestment ordinance (the one CIDA supported) is withdrawn by Ald. Davis. The City Task Force is not satisfied with the new ordinance and needs CIDA members' support in our attempt to strengthen it.

An analysis of both ordinances will be prepared and available at the CIDA November membership meeting. If you live in the following wards we need you to help us visit your alderperson to discuss the ordinance: wards 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 50. Please leave a message for Sharron Pitts at the CIDA office if you can help or if you know someone who can.

State Task Force Report

Anti-apartheid divestment bills #317 and 330, sponsored by Carol Moseley Braun and Woods Bowman are currently in interim study in the Urban Redevelopment Committee. Due to opposition by the Democratic leadership, these bills will not be voted out of committee during the autumn veto session. They may be voted out of committee after January.

The State Task Force will be working with, among other groups, the Association of Federal, State and County Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Illinois Nurses Association, segments of the Illinois Political Action Committee and the local Urban League to put pressure on state legislators to pass this legislation.

If you are interested in working with the State Task Force, please contact Basil Clunie at 869-1963 evenings, or leave your name and number at the CIDA office, 922-3915.

Steel Task Force Report

The bill to prohibit the importation of South African and Namibian steel for use in public buildings in Illinois will not be voted on in this legislative session. The sponsors did not place the bill in interim study nor did they attach it as an amendment to related legislation, so there is presently no pending bill.

CIDA will be reintroducing our bill in the next legislative session. We have been contacting many steel union labor leaders and will be working to get active union support for the bill when it is reintroduced.

We need your help. There is a lot of work to be done for our bill to pass. For further information contact Ora Schub at 538-0733 or leave a message at the CIDA office.

Forum on South Africa, Central America and the Caribbean

CIDA is planning an educational forum for December 8, linking issues of U.S. foreign policy in South Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. We intend

to hold the same forum in two accessible locations, the south side and Pilsen; one on Sunday afternoon and one on Sunday evening. Jean Sindalo, Executive Director of the Washington office on Africa and Dr. Charles Clements, executive director of Americans for Peace in the Americas and author of *Witness to War, an American Doctor in El Salvador*, are the scheduled speakers. CIDA hopes to follow-up this initial forum with two additional forums; one in March on liberation movements and one in May on strategizing for change.

We hope the December 8th forum will: 1) enable the Latino community and its allies to better appreciate and support the struggle in South Africa and Namibia; 2) enable the black community and its allies to better understand and support the struggle in Central America; and 3) help strengthen and deepen the ties between the black and Latino communities in Chicago.

Participation in the planning committee has been broad based and we are increasing our outreach efforts. For more information call Zeva Schub at 461-0543.

Anti-Apartheid Calendar

Every Thursday—Free South African Movement Demonstration—South African Consulate, 444 N. Michigan, Chicago, 12 Noon.

November 3—CIDA General Membership Meeting, U.E. Hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m.

November 8—"You Have Struck a Rock," award-winning documentary highlighting the role of black women in the South African struggle. Truman College, 1145 W. Wilson, Room 1905. 7:30 p.m. Free. Refreshments and discussion following the screening. Child care available. Sponsored by Women Organized for Reproductive Choice. For more information call (312) 786-0036.

November 15—"A Walk on the Wild Side of Apartheid". Play by South African Racism Task Force at 2nd Unitarian Church, 656 W. Barry. 7:30 p.m. Proceeds in part go to CIDA.

November 16 & 17—Midwest Conference Against Apartheid and Racism, Ida Noyes Student Center, 1212 E. 59th St., Chicago. For more information contact the Third World Political Forum or the Anti-Apartheid Student Alliance at the University of Chicago.

November 17—"Sizwi Banzi is Dead" at the Parkway Community House Theater, 500 E. 67th St., Chicago, 3 p.m. Sponsored by Minority Legal Education Resources, Inc. Call 895-0226 Monica Bullock or 917-6263 Vicki Marshall for ticket information.

November 20 & 24—Films "Brother from Another Planet" and "Portrait of Mandela"—\$3.00. For more information call Tommie Frye 924-9475.

November 24—CIDA shows "A Matter of Struggle" with Richie Havens, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m. For more information contact CIDA office 922-3915.

December 1—CIDA General Membership Meeting, U.E. Hall, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, 6 p.m.

December 8—CIDA Forum on South Africa, Central America and the Caribbean—Connecting the Struggles. For more information contact Zera Schub at 461-0543.

South African Update

On September 1, South Africa announced a 4 month moratorium on payment of principal of all foreign debts, in the face of foreign banks' refusal to renew short-term loans currently figured at \$18 billion with hard currency reserves estimated at only \$12 billion.

On September 13, 7 top South African business leaders met for talks with the African National Congress (ANC) at its headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. These discussions represented a break between the apartheid government and South African business leaders. Gaven Relly, chairman of Anglo-American Conglomerate, the South African mining giant, asked why he did not meet with the ANC ten years ago, replied, "because the structures of apartheid had not begun to break down as they are doing now.

On September 17, South African warplanes attacked Angolan troops in an attempt to prevent Angolan government advances against rebel UNITA forces which are supplied by South Africa. The U.N. Security Council on September 21 condemned South Africa for this latest cross-border attack.

On September 25, a South African Supreme Court judge ordered the police to refrain from assaulting detainees at jails in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. Evidence had been presented by District Surgeon Dr. Wendy Orr that detainees were being systematically assaulted in prison and during interrogation. Following her report, Dr. Orr was relieved of her duties and transferred.

On October 2, it was announced by his attorney that Nelson Mandela, jailed leader of the ANC, is being given medical tests and is expected to undergo surgery within a matter of weeks.

On October 17, Benjamin Moloise, an ANC member on death row for 2 years, was hanged, despite pleas for clemency from around the world. His family was not allowed custody of his body. Following his death, South Africa experienced widespread unrest, including the first instances of attacks on businesses in white areas.

On October 20, Commonwealth leaders agreed on limited economic sanctions against South Africa. Many leaders in the 46-member Commonwealth called for more stringent measures, and the weakening of the measures was attributed to Margaret Thatcher of Britain, who vigorously opposed comprehensive sanctions.

On October 21, in Pietermaritzburg, 16 leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) went on trial charged with treason. This represents the largest political trial in South Africa since the Treason Trial of 1964.

The same day South African authorities announced new 'equipment' to be deployed to combat unrest including a water cannon, a helicopter and armed trucks with guns that shoot rubber bullets in rapid fire.

On October 21, Columbia University became the first Ivy League university in the U.S. to completely divest from South Africa. After intense and protracted protests at Columbia, the University announced divestiture of its remaining \$39 million in South Africa related funds.

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